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NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jan Bohman, Community Relations Director, 541-968-2829

Council approves Protections for Individuals ordinance after public hearing

Tonight the Eugene City Council unanimously approved the Protections for Individuals ordinance, which provides certain protections for all Eugene residents, including immigrants. The action was taken following a public hearing at which many community members expressed their support of the ordinance. While other cities in Oregon have passed resolutions and policies regarding inclusivity, Eugene so far is the only one to place the protections in City Code.

In February, the Council voted unanimously to direct the City Manager to draft an ordinance that would put into City Code the provisions of existing State law that prevent use of City resources for purposes of enforcing federal immigration law unless related to a criminal offense. This ensures that if State law should change, the provisions will still remain in City Code. In addition, the ordinance applies to all City staff and operations, while the State law currently applies to law enforcement only. The ordinance also states that City resources may not be used to track the religious, political, or social views of individuals or groups unless necessary for a criminal investigation.

"Eugene is home to a diverse community, which includes many immigrants who have been feeling very vulnerable," said Mayor Lucy Vinis. "This ordinance reaffirms and extends the City of Eugene's long-standing commitment to human rights and community safety for all."

With an interest in helping the public understand the potential ordinance, Council chose not to use the term "sanctuary city" because it does not have a consistent definition and understanding. "Protections for Individuals" captures the intent of the ordinance which is to ensure that immigrants in Eugene feel safe using City services.

The ordinance will go into effect in 30 days.

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